

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
STATE OF IOWA

IOWA STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

EXTENSION SERVICE

AMES, IOWA

April 13, 1950.

Mr. J. F. Ford, President
Scott County Board of Library Trustees
Dixon, Iowa

Dear Mr. Ford:

I have been asked to speak at the District Library Meeting at Jefferson, May 2 on, among other things, "recent progress in county extension library service in the various counties".

I have read with great interest your correspondence to Mr. Orr and congratulate you on the fine start and accomplishments in your county. If you have any supplementary information or news of recent developments I should appreciate hearing from you in that regard.

Do you have any pictures of your library and bookmobile? If you have any publicity material that you think I could use, I'd be happy to receive and make use of it at the meeting. My time on the program is a half-hour, part of which I will be talking about "Rural Borrowers, Their Cards and Privileges". But, with actual examples of successful county-wide library service to talk about, perhaps the whole idea of library service will be more acceptable to counties still lagging behind.

Since Mr. Orr has been in touch with you, he suggested my writing to you. However, you may want to refer this to Miss Hage. I'd appreciate hearing from both of you.

Very truly yours,

Marjorie A. Clark
Marjorie A. Clark
Extension Librarian

MAC:MH

April 15, 1950

Marjorie A. Clark
Extension Librarian
Iowa State College,
Ames, Iowa.

Dear Miss Clark:

It is very gratifying to know that our efforts in establishing rural library service here in Scott County is creating favorable interest in library circles. We have been considerably handicapped this first quarter of the year because of total lack of funds due to delay in setting up the tax levy in this particular county but that actually worked to our advantage by allowing our Librarian time in which to set up the pattern of service, engage a suitable staff, equip and become established in a central headquarters and have a good start in processing several hundred books with which we were endowed or have purchased for future billing before proceeding into the actual extension of library service. Adequate funds are now becoming available.

In addition to the routine problems which must be met when creating a new public agency, several factors contributed to the progress we have made that might interest you and be applicable in similar situations in other Counties.

In the beginning, a generally favorable acceptance of a rural public library was brought about, chiefly, through the efforts of Mrs. Edna Spies, President of our County Board of Education, who labored tirelessly in it's behalf and was, I believe, one of the pioneer workers for County Public Libraries in this state. Others soon recognized the need and the idea caught on.

We were able to enlist the whole-hearted support of those most influential and esteemed in the community, thereby minimizing danger of active organized opposition. We hope, by a comprehensive plan of publicized education, to bring to the public a realization of the advantages to be gained by the establishment of such library services in the community. How it can harmonize with the educational program set up in the rural schools by the County Superintendent and thereby increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our rural school teachers. We expect our visual education department to be very complete.

Our budget, although of less than one mill on the taxable valuations in the rural taxing district, we believe is going to be sufficient to permit our steady expansion through out the year as rapidly as our Librarian and her staff can handle it.

Most important of all, we were certainly fortunate in being able to employ a Librarian with those qualifications so essential to the success of this project. Miss Hage seemingly possesses all those traits adaptable to library administration; a well grounded education, tact, boundless energy and a complete willingness to go beyond that point in her efforts where the average person would stop. To illustrate, I enclose a copy of a letter written by her to two board members who were not present at our last meeting. This was done on her own initiative that they might be kept up to date on the progress being made and that their interest might not lag. This letter will also serve to give you an indication of the accomplishments being made.

If I were to make any single recommendation to a Library Board relative to the organization of a County Library it would be to urge the most careful screening in the selection of its administrative officer as upon that person hinges the success or failure of the entire project.

I am contacting Miss Hage the first part of next week and will turn your letter over to her with the knowledge that she can give you a far more detailed and useful reply relative to what has been done here and is being planned for the future than I could hope to do. I know she, as well as myself and the other board members, will be very happy if any information we provide you can be beneficial as material for your talk at Jefferson or in any other way or to any one else who cares to make use of it.

Sincerely yours,

F. J. Ford, President
Scott County Board of Library Trustees.

Eldridge, Iowa
April 21, 1950

Miss Marjorie A. Clark
Extension Librarian
Iowa State College of Agriculture
Ames, Iowa

Dear Miss Clark:

In Tuesday's mail, came a letter from Miss Dilger enclosing one from you requesting information regarding the Scott County Library. Before I had a chance to answer it, that same day, Mr. Ford came in with a letter from you requesting information about the library, and also his own answer to it. After that, I got sidetracked and never have gotten to my typewriter. Now, I'm going to take care of both letters with one.

First of all, before I forget it, the Board of Trustees and the staff of the Scott County Library are holding open house at the library headquarters here in Eldridge on Sunday, April 30, from 2 until 5 o'clock, and we'd be very happy if you could come over for it. You could see for yourself, then, what we've accomplished, and I could tell you in greater detail, too, than I can on paper.

However, assuming that you may not be able to come, I'll try to give you a bird's eye view of the Scott County Library, although, there have been times when it's necessarily been more of a "worm's eye" view! This afternoon, for instance, when I was practically standing on my head helping to rebuild the sheving in the bookmobile!

I note with some amusement Mr. Ford's reference to my "boundless energy"! Believe me! There have been plenty of times in the past few weeks when I couldn't have bounded if my life had depended on it! But I'm having a wonderful time. And right here I want to say, even though it may sound as though Mr. Ford and I belong to a mutual admiration society, that my first suggestion for the accomplishment of a good library organization for any county is the careful selection, by the board of supervisors, of the members of the county library board. It is a very important factor in the success of the project. I think I have a very superior library board! And believe me, I tell them so, and one of these days I hope I'll find time to write to the board of supervisors and tell them so!

Our plan of service is to use the bookmobile to serve the rural schools during the school year. As there are 98 of them, with almost 3000 pupils enrolled therein, you can readily see that if we make the complete circuit once a month we'll do well; and that it will allow no time for use of the bookmobile to serve the communities of the county. We plan to set up library stations, or circulation centers in each of the communities of the county. That is, we will, if some organization or group of organizations in the town will sponsor the station. By sponsorship, we mean that they shall undertake the responsibility of locating and furnishing space and shelving for the books, and some one to look after them at the designated hours during which the station will be open. All this on a voluntary basis. Even Eldridge, where headquarters are located, will have to have another spot for the circulation of books to the people in that town. Our headquarters are a working

headquarters only. That, was a bit of a surprise to me when I arrived and learned of the board's plan; but the wisdom of the arrangement becomes immediately apparent. By so doing, no other town in the county can arouse petty jealousies about Eldridge's having a greater advantage than it (the other town) does because of the location of the headquarters. Eldridge was selected because there was a building available and because it's in the center of the county.

During this first summer of operation, before we get the stations set up, we are going to use the bookmobile to serve the towns of the county. It'll be good advertising of the library service, and prompt the towns to hurry with the establishment of their own stations. If we have them all established at the end of one year's operation, I shall consider it a great achievement. We are going to buy, very soon, a supplementary vehicle with which to serve the stations. It'll be either a panel truck job or a station wagon type of vehicle. I personally prefer the station wagon type - no wood construction, however - too hard to keep up - because of the available seating capacity for attending library meetings with board members. We could all ride in one car, yes, but the county car will have our name on it. Advertising!

We haven't actually gotten into operation yet, so I can't tell you anything from experience here in Scott County; but if the response I'm getting at all the meetings at which I've been telling our story in the past month is any indication of how this thing is going to be accepted, it'll go fast when we start.

Our loan period, at the schools, will be four weeks. We are going to be limited, at first, in the number of books we'll have to work with - we are going out for the first time next week, we hope, so we can get around once before school closes - so each child will be limited to one book. However, we have two book cards (different colors) in the books; one, we keep, charging the book to the school. The other the teacher - or her library helpers - will take out when the child takes the book. (He'll be allowed to make his own selection from the bookmobile, but only one) When Jim is through with his book, Billy will be through with his, too, and both will be returned, slipped, and charged out to the next person who wants to read them. By fall, we should have enough books ready for circulation to allow at least 2 to each child.

By the way, have you ever been confronted with thousands of books, all at once, that had to be gotten ready for circulation in three week's time? Believe me! It's an experience! I tossed that one around in my mind for quite a while, and finally decided they simply couldn't be cataloged before going out. We've checked the authority of the author's name, on the order card. Also on the order card we've put the classification number and the subject headings, so it's become a work card, too. From that we're making the shelf-list card now. The work cards will be filed and when we get a cataloger, she'll have a job to do! Everything, else, of course, necessary to putting the book into circulation is being done now. We're using the bill accessioning method, and omitting Cutter numbers.

I'm going to have a visible file, on a rotary base, for the registration. Registration period, three years. Borrowers' identification cards are being used so that a borrower may borrow books from any station in the county and the bookmobile provided he has his card with him. He must return the book to the place from which he borrowed it, however.

One other thing I didn't mention when talking of the bookmobile. We are going to carry adult books on it, as well as juveniles; and adults are being encouraged to

Clark - 3

come to the school, when the bookmobile is there, to borrow books. We will run on a definite schedule - 10 o'clock on Tuesday morning at Centerville Twp. #5, and four weeks later, we'll be back at the same place at the same time - barring a flat tire or being mired in the mud! Our schedule will be broadcast each morning so everyone will know just where we'll be and when.

I believe I've covered the ground, Miss Clark; but if you think of particular items that I've missed, let me know, and I'll try to take care of them for you.

I do hope you'll find it possible to come over for open house. We think we have something pretty fine over here, and when I compare it today with what it was the first time I saw it, I can't help shaking my head in amazement! I repeat, we have a very fine library board here in Scott County. They have laid the ground work for excellent library service in the county. I hope that I can produce what they have planned. They certainly provide unexcelled cooperation. Without their careful planning, hard work, and fine cooperation, the Scott County Library would not be where it is today, I am sure.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth B. Hage
Librarian
Scott County Library